

Staff Summary

Members present: Governor Gregoire, Representative Glenn Anderson, Dr. Terry Bergeson, Charley Bingham, Representative Bill Fromhold, Roberta Greene, Denny Heck, Eric Liu, Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, Bob Watt.

Governor Christine Gregoire convened the second meeting of the **Washington Learns** Steering Committee at 9:00 am on September 6, 2005. During her opening remarks Governor Gregoire recommended members read The World Is Flat, by Thomas Friedman. Next the three chairs of the Advisory Committees, Bob Watt, Terry Bergeson and Roberta Greene gave brief reports from the advisory committee meetings in August.

The Steering Committee heard presentations by Ann Daley, Executive Director of **Washington Learns**. Daley's first presentation, entitled "Revised **Washington Learns** Work Plan" focused on a general set of deliverables for **Washington Learns** and a calendar for considering the topics contained in SB 5441. Daley's second presentation, entitled "Understanding the Numbers" illustrated the difficulty of making meaningful data comparisons.

The topics addressed by the committee in response to the these presentations included:

- K-12 remediation
- Data structures/ choosing metrics that are powerful
- Performance-based data
- The need to demonstrate, in all three areas, that we are getting all that we can out of existing dollars before asking for new money

The Steering Committee heard a presentation by Marty Brown entitled "Fiscal Realities: The State Budget in Context". Brown presented a picture of state finances and education financing. Major budget challenges include medical inflation and an aging population, resulting in escalating expenditures for medical assistance and long-term care.

The topics and questions in response to this presentation included:

- How big is the expected population growth for long-term care?
- Do forecasts take pensions into account?
- Use of baby boom population growth modeling.

After lunch, the Steering Committee heard presentations by Joan Lombardi, Dane Linn, Patrick Callan and Aims McGuinness.

Early Learning

Joan Lombardi, Director of The Children's Project, presented an overview of state policy choices on early childhood development. She highlighted the importance of early learning guidelines and quality rating systems. She counseled building off our

strengths, which she said include ECEAP, the statewide system of child-care public health consultants, and a strong advocacy community.

In response to a question about using Early Learning metrics, Lombardi recommended a two-pronged approach: kindergarten readiness assessment and evaluating the quality of the programs from which children come.

K-12

Dane Linn, Director of Education Division at the National Governors' Association, highlighted the following areas as the most important policy issues on which to focus: a data system that links with higher ed to enable tracking students from kindergarten through secondary education; teacher performance-based compensation; teacher preparation, especially professional development; support for low performing schools; high school graduation expectations/assessment of college readiness; work readiness as well as college readiness and governance. For each focus area, Linn identified one or more states that have worked in the area where Washington might find appropriate applications. Steering Committee members explored further with questions related to: work readiness, effectiveness data related to National Board certified teachers, using national assessments and individualized student plans.

Higher Education

Aims McGuinness and Patrick Callan, from the National Collaborative for Postsecondary Education Policy briefly reviewed national and international efforts to increase effectiveness and efficiency by creating smoother transitions from one educational sector to the next, and to promote global competitiveness through improvements in higher education and workforce training. McGuinness began by noting his wariness about cataloguing other states' ideas and observed that we have a great capacity to put bits and pieces in place, but an inability to create a coherent system. He said creation of a coherent system requires changing our culture and creating the financing and leadership needed to meet clear goals. He expressed concern about the ability of the Steering Committee and the advisory groups to take on all the work they are charged with, and suggested that a major issue not on their plate is the growing number of 18 to 24-year-olds in our country who don't have high school diplomas, are not in the workforce, and are disenfranchised and angry. This led to several comments about the preventive benefits of quality early learning. McGuinness also noted that our financing system has disincentives for the three areas to work together; the financing structure actually works against system integration and easy transitions. In addition, the underlying financial base isn't there. Patrick Callan noted that as a country, our higher education institutions have not made the transition that they need to meet current and future workforce needs. In a 50 state evaluation of higher education, Washington looks relatively good, but this is primarily because other states are mediocre, not because Washington is so good. However, because Washington looks relatively good, it's hard to create a sense of urgency for change.

Callan warned against "cut and paste" policy and urged the steering committee to focus on the framework. Finally, Callan suggested that the steering committee focus on the interfaces between Early Learning, K-12 and Higher Education.